

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 11, and ending on page 7, line 2, with the following:

Referring to FIGS. 1, 2 and 3, there are perspective views of a vehicle sideloading elevator platform 10 in accordance with the present invention in the extended, fully lowered configuration; the extended, fully upraised configuration; and the folded, or stowed, configuration, respectively. FIGS. 4, 5 and 6 are rear lateral views of a vehicle sideloading elevator platform 10 in accordance with the present invention illustrating the vehicle sideloading elevator platform platform 10 in the extended, fully upraised configuration; the extended, partially raised configuration; and the folded, or stowed, configuration, respectively. FIGS. 7, 8 and 9 are rear lateral views of the inventive elevator platform 10 respectively shown in the extended, fully elevated configuration; the extended, partially elevated configuration; and the extended, fully lowered configuration. FIGS. 10 and 11 are end-on views of the inventive elevator platform 10 shown respectively in the extended, partially elevated configuration and the extended, fully lowered configuration. FIG. 12 is a top plan view shown partially in phantom of the elevator platform 10 of the present invention. The configuration and operation of the inventive elevator platform 10 will now be described in the following paragraphs with respect to the various aforementioned figures.

Please replace the paragraph on page 7, lines 8 - 21, with the following:

Elevator platform 10 includes a transport mechanism ~~to~~ 20 movably attached to a lower surface of the trailer body's bed 14c. Elevator platform 10 further includes a movable lift platform

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22 coupled to the transport mechanism 20 by means of operating linkage 24. Lift platform 22 in the extended, upraised position as shown in FIG. 2 is disposed adjacent to an opening 26 within sidewall 14b of the trailer body 12. Lift platform 22 is adapted for movement between the extended, fully upraised position shown in FIG. 2 and an extended, fully lowered position shown in FIG. 1. Also attached to a lower surface of the trailer body's bed 14c is an extendible support mechanism 30 which includes first and second telescoping legs 32a and 32b and a cross frame 32c. The portions of the telescoping legs 32a, 32b and cross frame 32c are fixedly attached to the lower surface of the trailer body's bed 14c. The extendible support mechanism 30 provides support for a forward portion of the trailer body 12 when the trailer body 12 is not attached to a tractor, or truck (not shown for simplicity). The extendible support mechanism 30 is conventional in design and operation and does not form a part of the present invention.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 22, and ending on page 9, line 6, with the following:

The elevator platform's transport mechanism 20 is comprised of first and second side plates 50a and 50b which are connected together by means of plural cross members, one of which is shown as element 51 in the figures. All of the components of the transport mechanism 20, as well as of the vehicle sideloading elevator platform 10, in general, are preferably comprised of a high strength steel. Upper end portions of the transport mechanism's 20 first and second side plates 50a, 50b are respectively attached to first and second track, or rail, assemblies 44a and 44b. Each of the track assemblies 44a, 44b is securely attached to the lower surface of the trailer body's

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bed 14c. First and second track assemblies 44a, 44b are arranged in parallel and are aligned with the cargo opening 26 within the trailer body's sidewall 14b. Upper end portions of each of the transport mechanism's 20 first and second side plates 50a, 50b are provided with a respective pair of rollers 46a and 46b. Each pair of rollers 46a, 46b attached to the transport mechanism's 20 first and second side plates 50a, 50b is inserted in and attached to a respectively one of the track assemblies 44a and 44b. Thus, the transport mechanism's 20 first side plate 50a is slidably attached to the first track assembly 44a by means of a pair of rollers 46a and 46b, while the transport mechanism's 20 second side plate 50b is slidably attached to the second track assembly 44b by means of a similar pair of rollers, only one of which is shown in the figures as element 44b in FIGS. 10 and 11. Disposed between the first and second track assemblies 44a, 44b and securely connected by conventional means to the transport mechanism 20 is a first hydraulic cylinder 40. With a first end of the hydraulic cylinder 40 connected to the transport mechanism 20, a second opposed end of the hydraulic cylinder is attached to a mounting bracket 42 affixed to the lower surface of the trailer body's bed 14c. As viewed in FIGS. 4-9, extension of the first hydraulic cylinder 40 causes rightward displacement of the transport mechanism 20 along the lower surface of the trailer body's bed 14c. Conversely, retraction of the first hydraulic cylinder 40 results in leftward displacement of the transport mechanism 20 along the lower surface of the trailer body's bed 14c. As shown in the figures, the rod end of the hydraulic cylinder 40 is connected to mounting bracket 42, while the butt end of the hydraulic cylinder 40 is connected to the transport mechanism 20. Transport mechanism 20 is moved to the right as viewed in the various figures

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when it is desirable to put the vehicle sideloading elevator platform 10 to use, and is moved to the left as viewed in the various figures for retracting the transport mechanism 20 in configuring the vehicle sideloading platform 10 in the nonuse, stowed position.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 7, and ending on page 10, line 2, with the following:

Connected to an outer surface of the first side plate 50a by means of a pivot pin 58a is a first link 52a. Connected to an outer surface of the second side plate 50b by means of another pivot pin 58b is a second link 52b. Similarly, connected to an inner surface of the transport mechanism's 20 first side plate 50a by means of a pivot pin 60a is a third link 54a. Connected to an inner surface of the transport mechanism's 20 second side plate 50b by means of another pivot pin 60b is a fourth link 54b. Each of the aforementioned links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b is pivotally connected to either the first or second side plates 50a, 50b of the transport mechanism 20 at a first end of the link. Each of the first through fourth links includes two linear sections which form an obtuse angle. Each of the links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b is preferably comprised of a pair of linear tubular members of high strength steel which are light in weight and connected by conventional means such as a weldment. Each of the links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b may also be in the form of a unitary tubular member having an inner portion which is bent to form an obtuse angle.

Intermediate, adjacent portions of the first link 52a and the third link 54a are pivotally connected together by means of the combination of pivot pins 66 and 68 and a first coupling link 56a.

Similarly, intermediate, adjacent portions of the second and fourth links 52b, 54b are pivotally

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connected together by means of the combination of a pair of pivot pins (not shown in the figures for simplicity) and a second coupling link 56b. The coupling links 56a and 56b allow the four angled links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b to remain in parallel alignment during operation and storage of the elevator platform 10 for maintaining the lift platform 22 in a horizontal orientation.

Please replace the paragraph on page 10, lines 3 - 10, with the following:

The butt end of a second hydraulic cylinder 57 is connected to the transport mechanism's 20 first and second side plates 50a, 50b by means of cross member 51. Hydraulic cylinder 57 is freely pivotable about cross member 51. A second, opposed rod end of hydraulic cylinder 57 is connected by means of a pivot pin 72 to a cross member 73 which is connected at opposed ends to the third and fourth links 54a and 54b. With the first and third links 52a, 54a connected to the second and fourth links 52b, 54b by means of the combination of cross link 73 and coupling links 56a and 56b, the distal ends of all four links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b may be raised or lowered by the retraction or extension, respectively, of hydraulic cylinder 57.

Please replace the paragraph on page 10, lines 11 - 22, with the following:

Distal ends of the first and third links 52a, 54a are pivotally connected to a main platform 74 portion of a lift platform 22 by means of pivot pins ~~62~~ 62a and ~~64~~ 64a, respectively. Similarly, distal ends of the second and fourth links 52b, 54b are pivotally coupled to main platform 74 by ~~a pair of pivoting pins which are not shown in the figures for simplicity~~ means of pivot pins 62b and 64b, respectively. In addition to main platform 74, lift platform 22 further includes a ramp 76 which is pivotally connected to the main platform by means of a pair of pivot pins 78a and 78b. A

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distal end of the ramp 76 is beveled to facilitate the loading and unloading of goods unto or off of the lift platform 22. Ramp 76 is shown in the folded position relative to the main platform 74 in FIGS. 4-6, as well as in FIG. 3. Ramp 76 is shown in the extended configuration relative to main platform 74 in FIGS. 7-9, as well as in FIGS. 1 and 2. Ramp 76 ~~maybe~~ may be moved between the retracted and extended positions on main platform 74 by manually engaging the distal end portion of the ramp 76 and pivotally displacing the ramp 76 relative to the main platform 74.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 1, and ending on page 12, line 10, with the following:

The following series of steps is sequentially carried out in the operation of the vehicle sideloading elevator platform 10 in proceeding from the nonuse, stored position shown in FIGS. 3 and 6 to any of the extended use configurations shown in the various other figures. In proceeding from the nonuse, stored configuration, the second hydraulic cylinder 57 is first retracted a short distance so as to raise lift platform 22 slightly to permit restraining chains 82a and 82b to be disconnected from a respective chain bracket attached to the lift platform 22 to allow the lift platform to be lowered, where one of the chain brackets is shown as element 80 in FIG. 3. The first hydraulic cylinder 40 then extends causing the transport mechanism 20 to be displaced rightwardly as shown in FIGS. 4-6. With the first hydraulic cylinder 40 fully extended and the transport mechanism 20 disposed generally below the cargo opening 26 within sidewall 14b, the second hydraulic cylinder 57 then extends so as to pivotally displace the first through fourth links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b relative to the transport mechanism 20. Extension of the second hydraulic

cylinder 57 causes the first through fourth links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b to extend downwardly from the trailer body 12 to a position such that lift platform 22 is laterally displaced from the trailer body 12 as shown in FIG. 5. In this position, the lift platform 22 is at an intermediate height above support surface 16. The intermediate height of the lift platform 22 as shown in FIGS. 5 and 8 is between the full-up platform position shown in FIGS. 4 and 7 and the full-down position of the platform 22 shown in FIG. 9. From the intermediate position of the lift platform 22 shown in FIGS. 5 and 8, the lift platform 22 may be raised to the fully upraised position shown in FIGS. 4 and 7 by retracting the second cylinder 57. In the fully upraised position, the lift platform 22 is disposed immediately adjacent the sidewall opening 26 within the first sidewall 14a of the trailer body 12 such as shown in FIG. 2. Retraction of the second hydraulic cylinder 57 from its extended configuration shown in FIG. 8 to its less extended configuration shown in FIG. 7 draws the distal ends of the first through fourth links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b upward and inward toward the truck body bed 14c. Conversely, extension of the second hydraulic cylinder 57 from its configuration shown in FIG. 8 to its extended configuration shown in FIG. 9 causes the distal ends of the first through fourth links 52a, 52b and 54a, 54b to move downwardly and to the left as viewed in FIG. 9. This maintains lift platform 22 in a horizontal orientation and in closely spaced relation to, or in contact with, the support surface 16. The position of the lift platform 22 shown in FIG. 9 facilitates the loading and offloading of goods onto and off of the lift platform 22 from the support surface 16. Similarly, the orientation and position of the lift platform 22 as shown in FIG. 7 facilitates the offloading from the trailer body 12 of goods onto the lift platform 22, or the

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offloading from the lift platform 22 of goods onto the trailer body 12.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 11, and ending on page 13, line 7, with the following:

In FIGS. 7 and 8, the ramp 76 of the lift platform 22 has been rotationally displaced in a clockwise direction from the folded position of the ramp 76 shown in FIGS. 4 and 5 so that the ramp is fully extended from the lift platform's main platform 74. Prior to moving the lift platform 22 to the retracted, stowed configuration, ramp 76 would first be rotationally displaced so as to be positioned above and in contact with the lift platform's main platform 74 to allow for storage of the lift platform 22 beneath the trailer body 12. From the configuration of the elevator platform 10 shown in FIGS. 8 and 9, the elevator platform 10 is placed in the folded, stowed configuration by retracting the second hydraulic cylinder 57 to an extent as shown in FIG. 6. The extent of retraction of the second hydraulic cylinder 57 required to position the lift platform 22 at a height below that of the bed 14c of the trailer body 12 is between the extensions of the second hydraulic cylinder 57 shown in FIGS. 7 and 8. If the second hydraulic cylinder 57 is retracted beyond the point of positioning the lift platform 22 immediately below the trailer body's bed 14c, the lift platform 22 will assume the fully upraised position shown in FIGS. 4 and 7. Similarly, the lift platform 22 may be moved from the fully upraised position shown in FIGS. 4 and 7 for storage by extending the second hydraulic cylinder 57 to an extent less than that shown in FIG. 8 such that the lift platform 22 is positioned slightly below the level of the trailer body's bed 14c. With the lift platform 22 slightly below the trailer body's bed 14c, the transport mechanism 20, lift platform 22,

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and operating linkage 24 are moved to the nonuse, stowed position beneath the trailer body 12 shown in FIGS. 3 and 6 by retraction of the first hydraulic cylinder 40.

Please replace the paragraph on page 13, lines 8 - 12, with the following:

A control system for the vehicle sideloading elevator platform 10 of the present invention could assume various conventional forms. For example, one operator control could be provided for the first hydraulic cylinder 40, while another operator control could be provided for the second hydraulic cylinder 57. Or a single control could be provided for both cylinders, with a mode switch included to select between the first and second hydraulic cylinders.